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PRESS RELEASE

USAID/BANGLADESH HOSTS WORKSHOP ON FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

DHAKA, OCTOBER 5 -- USAID/Bangladesh hosted a two-day policy workshop bringing together over 150 representatives from the private, academic, and not-for-profit sectors involved in promoting and spurring critical food security and agricultural developmental issues. The event, entitled ‘Enhancing Food Security in Bangladesh: Evidence for Action’ was inaugurated by Honorable Minister Dr. M. A. Razzaque, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. The workshop was organized under USAID’s Policy Research and Strategy Support Program.

The USAID-funded US\$ 12m Policy Research and Strategy Support Program aims to utilize applied research to fill knowledge gaps on critical food security and agricultural developmental issues in Bangladesh. USAID, through this project, works with the Ministries of the Government of Bangladesh and with national research and knowledge management institutions such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Bangladesh Agricultural University, and Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies (BIDS) to analyze and assist on policy development in the agriculture sector. USAID also facilitates the Bangladeshi Government’s policymaking process, stimulates policy dialogue, and communicates evidence-based research findings to relevant Ministries of the Government of Bangladesh and other stakeholders.

Through this workshop, USAID solicited inputs from civil society, academicians and scholars to further their agricultural developmental issues agenda and build capacity in disaster management and preparedness. By October 2011, USAID will outline policy initiatives such as seed management, fertilizer issues and land ownership issues to advocate to the national government.

In the past, USAID assisted the Government of Bangladesh to initiate major policy changes in agricultural development and market systems. For instance, in the late ‘90s, the authority to import food grain (rice, maize, and wheat) was restricted to only the Government of Bangladesh. USAID, through its national food policy projects, initiated the trade liberalization process, and as a result, price importers were also allowed to import rice and other food grains. Building on past successes, by

September 2014, USAID expects to increase food production in targeted areas, increase income for the rural and urban poor, improve nutrition for vulnerable groups, and strengthen capacity of key Bangladeshi institutions for future food policy analysis.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is working to improve the lives of the people of Bangladesh, especially the poor. USAID administers programs in Bangladesh in five broad areas; improving health and pre-primary education; creating income opportunities for the rural poor; supporting good governance; enhancing food security; and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5.8 billion in assistance to Bangladesh since 1971.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)